
Manner: NATURAL

A death that is classified as natural comes under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner because of the sudden and unexpected nature of the death, because there is no physician who has knowledge or awareness of the decedent's condition, or when circumstances surrounding death arouse suspicion. In these situations the Medical Examiner becomes responsible for certification of death. It should be stressed that the natural deaths investigated by the Medical Examiner are not representative of all natural deaths in the general population, because these jurisdictional considerations introduce a significant sampling bias.

In 1998, there were 529 deaths attributed to natural causes that came under the jurisdiction of the King County Medical Examiner, representing 35% (529/1507) of the cases investigated. Eighty-one percent (428/529) of these deaths were certified by the King County Medical Examiner, and 19% (101/529) were certified by attending physicians who had knowledge of the decedent's medical condition. Autopsies were performed in 73% (312/428) of the deaths certified as natural by the King County Medical Examiner, which includes autopsies performed in all 15 deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

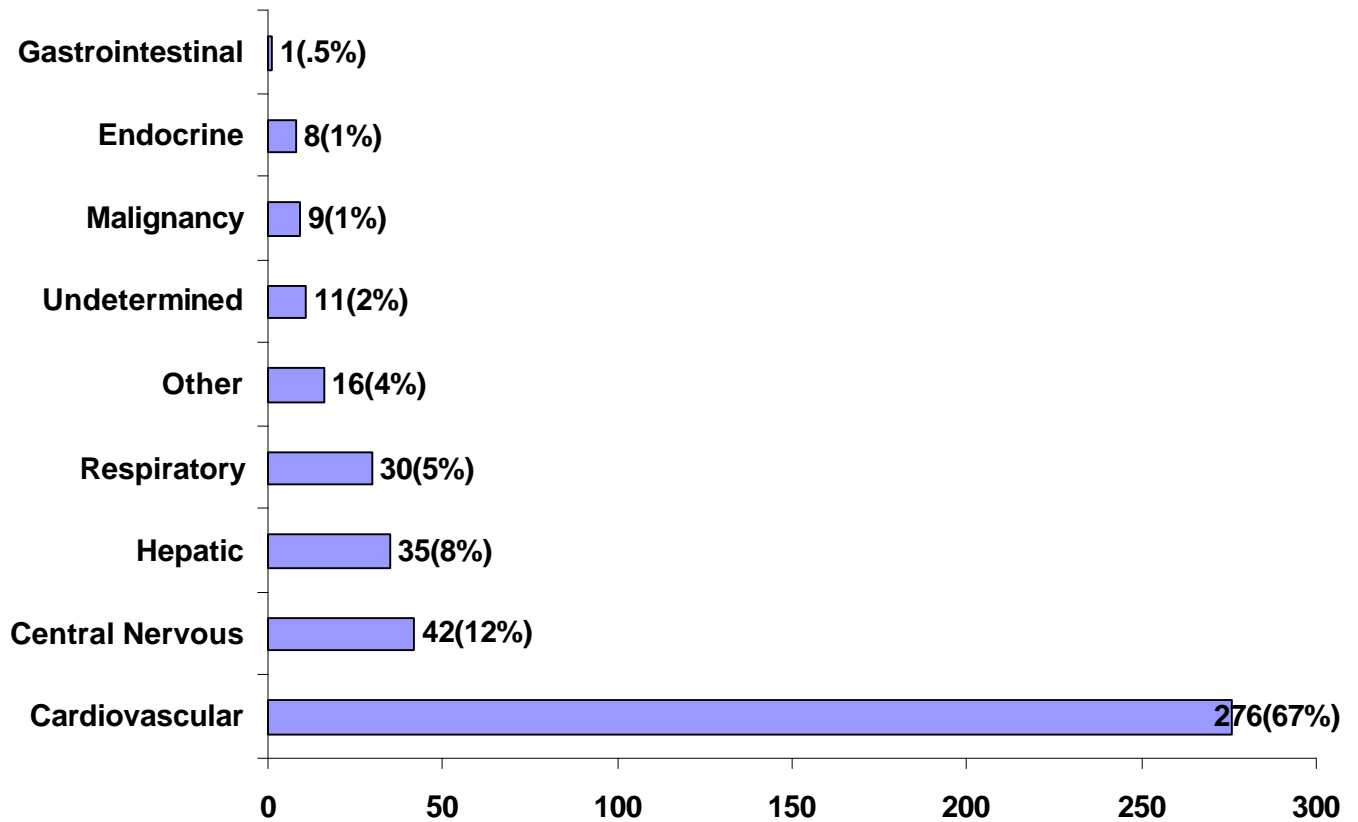
The data presented in this section are derived from the 428 natural deaths certified by the King County Medical Examiner. Cardiovascular disease accounted for the greatest proportion of natural deaths. Most deaths in which an autopsy was not performed were certified as due to "probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease."

Table 5-1 Disease Processes Causing Natural Deaths in 1998

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
CARDIOVASCULAR	
109	Probable arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
100	Arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD) (includes myocardial infarct)
	Hypertensive ASCVD / Hypertensive heart disease
43	
5	Cardiomyopathy
7	Cardiac dysrhythmia
3	Valvular heart disease including endocarditis
5	Aortic aneurysm/Dissection
0	Coronary artery dissection
2	Myocarditis
2	Congenital Heart Disease
0	Bacterial Endocarditis
276	TOTAL CARDIOVASCULAR
RESPIRATORY	
15	Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
6	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
4	Pulmonary thromboembolus
2	Asthma
3	Pneumonia
30	TOTAL RESPIRATORY

NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM	
12	Spontaneous intracerebral hemorrhage
20	Epilepsy (idiopathic & other non-trauma etiologies)
6	Spontaneous rupture of aneurysm
1	Meningitis
3	Other
42	TOTAL CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM
HEPATIC	
18	Cirrhosis
15	Fatty liver
2	Other
35	TOTAL HEPATIC
MALIGNANCY	
9	TOTAL MALIGNANCY
GASTROINTESTINAL	
0	Perforating ulcer
1	Gastrointestinal hemorrhage
0	Other
1	TOTAL GASTROINTESTINAL

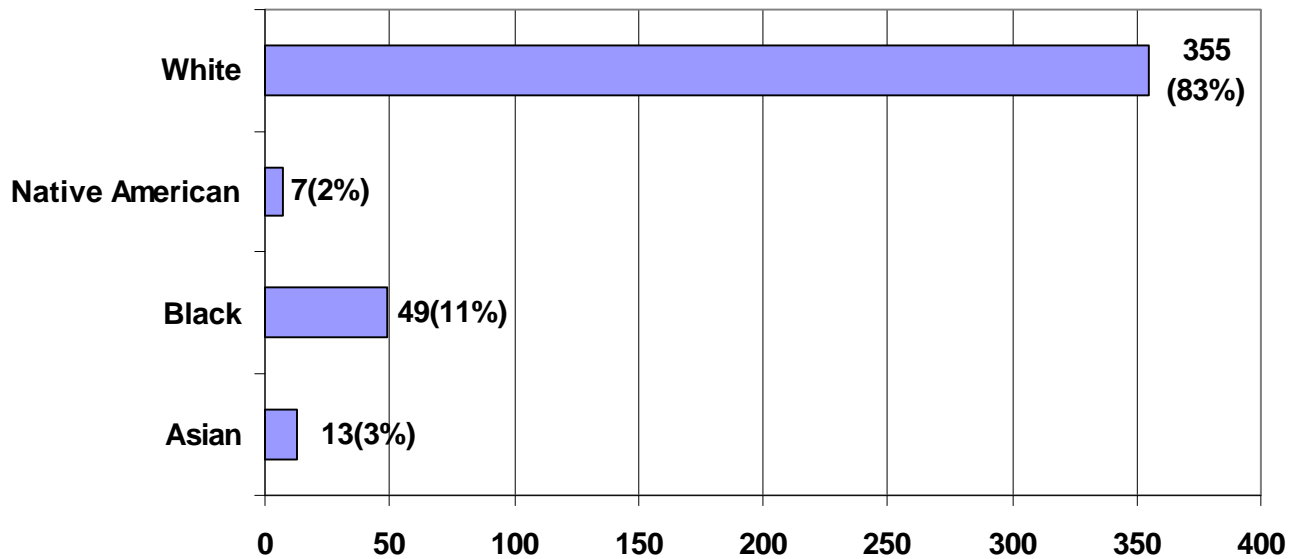
NUMBER OF DEATHS	DISEASE DESCRIPTION
ENDOCRINE	
5	Diabetic ketoacidosis
3	Pancreatitis
8	TOTAL ENDOCRINE
OTHER PROCESSES	
1	Chronic ethanolism
1	HIV/AIDS
2	Necrotizing Fasciitis
4	Sepsis polymicrobial
8	Other
16	TOTAL OTHER PROCESSES
11	CAUSE UNDETERMINED after complete autopsy including toxicological analysis
152	TOTAL Non-cardiovascular Cause of Death
276	TOTAL Cardiovascular Cause of Death
101	Natural Deaths Certified by Attending Physician
529	Total NATURAL DEATHS under KCMEO Jurisdiction, 1998

Graph 5-1 Deaths Due to Natural Causes in 1998

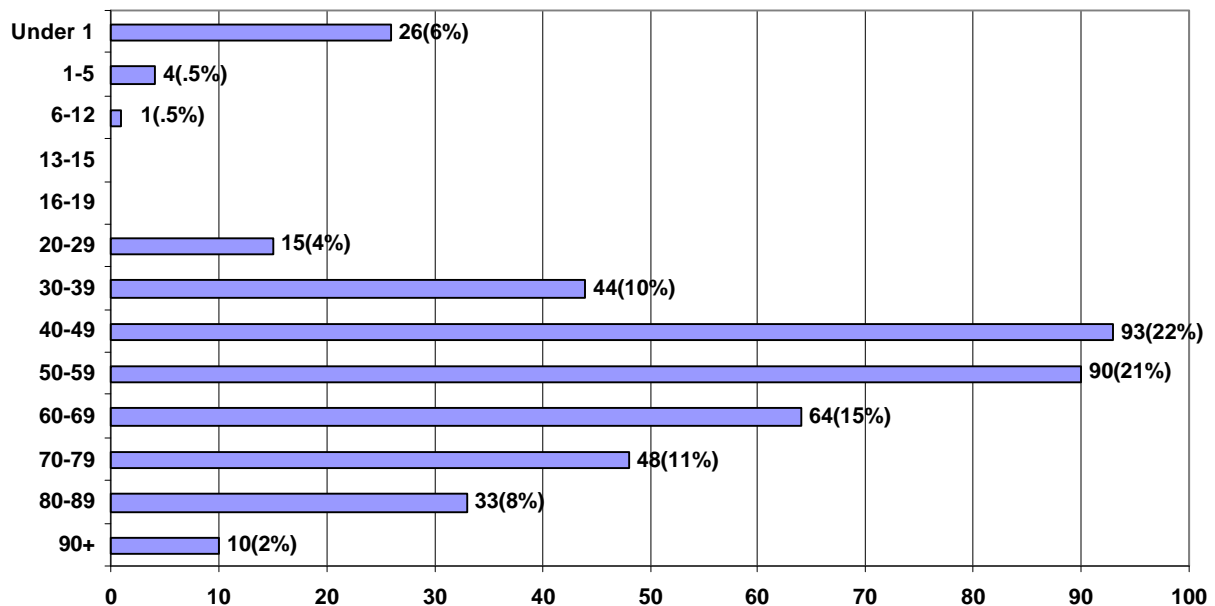
TOTAL NUMBER OF NATURAL DEATHS CERTIFIED BY KCME PATHOLOGISTS =428

Table 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent

DISEASE PROCESS/ GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	ASIAN	BLACK	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE	OTHER		
Cardiovascular	8	20	3	244	1		276
<i>Male</i>	4	16	2	184	1	207	
<i>Female</i>	4	4	1	60	0	69	
Central Nervous	3	7	0	31	1		42
<i>Male</i>	3	3	0	14	0	20	
<i>Female</i>	0	4	0	17	1	22	
Endocrine	0	3	0	5	0		8
<i>Male</i>	0	2	0	5	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Gastrointestinal	0	0	0	1	0		1
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Hepatic	0	2	2	30	1		35
<i>Male</i>	0	2	1	21	1	25	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	1	9	0	10	
Malignancy	0	1	0	8	0		9
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	4	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	4	0	4	
Respiratory	2	8	2	17	1		30
<i>Male</i>	1	5	1	12	1	20	
<i>Female</i>	1	3	1	5	0	10	
Undetermined Natural	0	2	0	9	0		11
<i>Male</i>	0	1	0	2	0	3	
<i>Female</i>	0	1	0	7	0	8	
Other	0	6	0	10	0		16
<i>Male</i>	0	4	0	8	0	12	
<i>Female</i>	0	2	0	2	0	4	
Total	13	49	7	355	4		428
Percent	3	11	2	83	1		

Graph 5-2 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Race of the Decedent

Number of Natural Deaths

Graph 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent

Number of Natural Deaths

Table 5-3 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Age Group of the Decedent

AGE GROUP(YEARS)																
DISEASE PROCESS/ GENDER	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +	SUB TOTAL	TOTAL	
Cardiovascular	1	0	0	0	0	6	20	48	63	56	43	30	9		276	
Male	1	0	0	0	0	5	14	41	53	39	34	16	4		207	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	7	10	17	19	14	5		69	
Central Nervous	1	2	0	0	0	2	7	17	9	2	0	1	1		42	
Male	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	13	3	0	0	0	0		20	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	4	6	2	0	1	1		22	
Endocrine	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	0		8	
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	0		7	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		1	
Gastrointestinal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		1	
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		1	
Hepatic	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	13	7	4	0	0	0		35	
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	8	6	3	0	0	0		25	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	1	1	0	0	0		10	
Malignancy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	0	0		9	
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0		5	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0		4	
Respiratory	16	0	1	0	0	2	1	5	5	0	0	0	0		30	
Male	11	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	0		20	
Female	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0		10	
Undetermined Natural	2	2	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0		11	
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0		3	
Female	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0		8	
Other	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	0	0	2	0		16	
Male	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	1	0		12	
Female	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0		4	
Total	26	4	1	0	0	15	44	93	90	64	48	33	10		428	
Percent	6	.5	.5	0	0	4	10	22	21	15	11	8	2			

Table 5-4 Deaths Due to Natural Causes and Gender of the Decedent

DISEASE PROCESS	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Cardiovascular	207	69	276
Central Nervous	20	22	42
Endocrine	7	1	8
Gastrointestinal	0	1	1
Hepatic	25	10	35
Malignancy	5	4	9
Respiratory	20	10	30
Undetermined Natural	3	8	11
Other	12	4	16
Total	299	129	428
Percent	70	30	

